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ABSTRACT

This conference presentation describes the characteristics of a living educational theory, explores its implications for self-study methodology, and offers a self-study from an educative relationship with a teacher educator. The theory has its basis in the following ideas: educators exist as living contradictions when their values are negated in practice within themselves, their institutions, and their societies; educators can move an educational enquiry forward in action-reflection cycles which have the systematic form of a living educational research methodology; and educators can construct their own living educational theories as descriptions and explanations for their own educational development as they move their educational inquiries forward on the basis of experiencing themselves as living contradictions using the action-reflection cycle. The paper promotes the view that educational theory can be reconstructed from action research in which practitioners research their own professional practice and describe and explain their educational development as learners as they attempt to improve the quality of their practice. Excerpts are presented from a Master of Education dissertation by Peggy Kok titled "The Art of an Educational Enquirer" to explain the educative relationship with a teacher and the development of an understanding of the nature of education. (Contains 38 references.) (JDD)

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ED 372 028

CREATING A LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY FROM AN ANALYSIS OF MY OWN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES: HOW DO YOU CREATE AND TEST THE VALIDITY OF YOUR LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY?

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ABSTRACT

I assume that a fundamental purpose of educational research is to make a contribution to educational knowledge by creating and testing educational theory. Because of this assumption I was concerned that the index for the 1993 AERA programme did not contain any references to educational knowledge or educational theory. Thus I decided to see if I could get them included in the 1994 programme. Having secured this objective I now want to convince educational researchers who are working on the self-study of teacher education practices that they should create their own educational theories of their living educational practices. I want to convince you that you should make public, together with your justifications, the criteria you use to test the validity of your theories. In the process of explicating my own living educational theory I intend to reveal a self-study methodology for use in the production and testing of such a theory.

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INTRODUCTION

Just before sitting down to begin a draft of this paper, I looked at the evening's television. Here are the details of one programme.

One and a half million Jewish children were murdered by the Nazis - the sort of mind-numbing statistic that often prevents the human dimensions of the Holocaust from being absorbed. Peter Gordon's film addresses this by taking four survivors, men and women in their sixties now, but who had the outrageous misfortune of being Jewish children in occupied Europe.

I then recalled how gripped I was in Eisner's (1993) Presidential Address to AERA when he quoted Elie Wiesel's (1969) account of his experiences in a Nazi death camp.

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

Whenever I am reminded of the holocaust I know why I value education and educational research so much. It is because I believe that education has the power to express those values from our general culture which can resist such violations to life, freedom, justice, integrity, truth and democracy. I would like you to bear this point in mind when considering my justification below for the values I draw from the general culture to characterise what counts as 'educational' and 'educational theory'.

In 1973 at the age of 29 I looked back on 6 years as a full time comprehensive school science teacher and 4 years part-time study at London University which, at the time, had an international reputation for its research into educational theory. Because the theory could not produce a valid description and explanation for my own professional practice or those of my colleagues or pupils, I concluded that this educational theory was mistaken. I moved to the University of Bath in 1973 with a commitment to reconstruct educational theory in a way which could produce such valid descriptions and explanations. This commitment has remained with me and continues to move forward my research into the nature of educational theory and educational research methodology. I will now present the characteristics of a living educational theory and explore its implications for self-study methodology together with a self-study from one of my educative relationships with a teacher educator. Because of the influence of science and the disciplines of education on what counts as educational theory I will relate living educational theory to these traditions.

LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY

The formalisation of the view of educational theory as science can be found in the first issue of Educational Theory in 1951. Anderson (1951) defined educational theory as strictly analogous to the part played by theory in the natural sciences. Ausubel (1953) expressed his concern with this 'basic science' approach and pointed out that its relevancy was too remote and indirect because it was not orientated toward solving educational problems, and its findings, if relevant, were applicable only if much educational research was performed to translate general principles into the more specific form they had to assume in the task-specialized and more complex contexts of pedagogy.

O'Connor (1957), in his influential introduction to the philosophy of education, concluded his essay on 'What is an Educational Theory?', with the statement that the word theory as it is used in educational contexts is generally a courtesy title. It is justified only where we are applying well-established experimental findings in psychology or sociology to the practice of education.

The creative phase of the genesis of an alternative to the 'science' approach owes much to the work of Louis Arnaud Reid (1962) the first holder of the Chair of the Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education at London University. Reid cautioned practitioners against the idea that educational theory

was a theory, like the physical sciences, which could be applied directly to practice. The critical phase of the enquiry, which led to the establishment of the alternative 'disciplines' approach to educational theory, was carried out by Richard Peters (1966) and Paul Hirst (1970).

The 'disciplines' approach held that educational theory was constituted by the philosophy, sociology, psychology and history of education. In their Logic of Education, Hirst and Peters (1970) state their intention of showing how their conceptual view of education must impose a structure upon practical decisions, impose wholeness on a collection of disparate entities, and impose its stamp on the curriculum. Some thirteen years later Hirst (1983) gave a most generous acknowledgement of his mistake in relation to his belief that the justification of practical educational principles was not grounded in reflections in competent practice but in an appeal to principles within the disciplines of education.

In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. That now seems to me to be a mistake.

The past decade has witnessed a growing concern that educational research communities throughout the world do not appear to have created educational theories which have the capacity to produce valid explanations for the educational development of individuals. Whilst research 'training' programmes still draw their educational research methodologies from the disciplines of education Torbert's (1980) question, Why is educational research so uneducational?, and Yvonna Lincoln's (1993) analysis of the crisis in the methods programmes for educational researchers, give some indication of the lack of consensus surrounding the nature of theory and methodology.

The resolution I want to offer you is based on three original ideas. The first concerns the nature of 'I' in practical educational questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'. I am suggesting that you and I exist as living contradictions when our values are negated in practice. For example, you might value your pupils' freedom of enquiry, your right to participate in democractic decision making, your culture's commitment to social justice and freedom of information. You might also have experienced a tension in your educative relationships with your students and pupils, at moments when you recognise that you are exercising your control in a way which is denying some of your values. Some of you, I know, have experienced the pressures of the tenure process in which intellectual compromises may have become necessary to obtain economic security. The experience of existing as a living contradiction might hit you as you look at the percentages of men and women, black and white, in powerful positions in our institutions. These may provoke expressions of outrage in those of us who believe in equality of opportunity. We might also feel a sense of contradiction in living in our societies as we learn that secret actions were taken by our governments and armed forces about which we not only knew nothing but were also deceived. The bombing of Cambodia by the United States under Richard Nixon and the supply of arms making machinery to Iraq by British manufacturers before the Gulf War, immediately come to mind. I make these points to emphasise that our experience of 'I' as a living contradiction can be located within ourselves, our institutions and our societies.

The second original idea I want to use in the construction of educational theory is that 'I' as a living contradiction can move an educational enquiry forward in action reflection cycles which have a systematic form of a living educational research methodology (McNiff 1992);

I experience a concern when my values are not lived fully in my practice.
I imagine what I can do to improve matters (an action plan).
I act on my action plan and gather data which might enable me to make a judgement on the quality and effectiveness of my actions.
I evaluate my actions in relation to my values, understandings and skills.
I modify my concerns, ideas and actions in the light of my evaluations.

The generalisability of this form of methodology will depend to some extent on whether you recognise it as corresponding to the way in which you explore the implications for yourselves of asking questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?', and 'How do I help my pupils to improve the quality of their learning?'.

The third original idea is that you and I can construct our own living educational theories (Whitehead, 1989) as descriptions and explanations for our own educational development as we move our educational enquiries forward on the basis of experiencing ourselves as living contradictions using the above form of action reflection cycle.

I use the word, 'living' to emphasise: the values which constitute the experience of existing as a living contradiction are embodied in an individual's form of life; educational research methodology involving an individual in projecting themselves towards a possible world which is not yet in existence; descriptions and explanations which individual learners are offering for their own educational development which make sense of their present practice in relation to an evaluation of their past practice and an intention to contribute to the creation of a better world in the future.

Let me make it clear that I am not denying the important contributions which conceptual and propositional theories can make to an individual's educational development. A story of my own educational development (Whitehead 1993) demonstrates how insights from such theories have extended my cognitive range and concerns and hence contributed to this development. However, in claiming that conceptual theories cannot produce adequate explanations for the educational development of an individual I am drawn to Alastair McIntyre's (1988) insight that, *the rival claims to truth of contending traditions of enquiry depend for their vindication on the adequacy and explanatory power of the histories which the resources of each of those traditions in conflict enable their adherents to write.*

I am also drawn to Edward Said's (1993) recent work on Culture and Imperialism. Since producing my first naive paper on professionalism and education as an education student in 1967 I have believed that a primary role of an educator is to select what is worth while from the general culture and to communicate this to the next generation as they give a form to their own lives. Said uses the word 'culture' in two senses. First he means all those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure. Second, culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought (Said 1993 xiii). In his analysis of the question of politics Said points out that no country is exempt from the debate about what is to be read, taught, or written. He says that in considering such questions he keeps coming back, simplistically and idealistically, to the notion of opposing and alleviating coercive domination, transforming the present by trying rationally and analytically to lift some of its burdens, situating the works of various literatures with reference to one another and to their historical modes of being. He says that in the configurations and by virtue of the transfigurations taking place around us, readers and writers are now in fact secular intellectuals with the archival, expressive, elaborative, and moral responsibilities of that role.

I know that the selection of what is worth while from a general culture raises fundamental questions of justification. I relate these questions to the following processes of accountability within the creation of living educational theories.

In producing an explanation for one's own educational development an individual is creating their educational theory and making a claim to educational knowledge. Such claims raise questions about the standards of judgement which can be used to test the validity of the claim to knowledge.

I suggest that these standards are the values you and I use for giving a form to our own lives in our professional practice. I am thinking of values as the human goals we use to give our lives their meaning

and purpose. It is probably beyond the scope of a paper such as this to communicate clearly and comprehensively these meanings and to justify the values which can be used to test the validity of an individual's claim to know their own educational development. However. I would like to try to do this below and to offer a justification for these values/ standards in relation to my own educational development and in a way which may have some universalisability.

I have spent the last 21 years at the University of Bath promoting the view that educational theory can be reconstructed from a form of action research in which practitioners research their own professional practice and describe and explain their educational development as learners as they attempt to improve the quality of their practice. It thus seems consistent with this view to offer an account of my own educational development as a living contradiction and educational researcher, whose practice is focused on the reconstruction of educational theory. I offer this to you so that you can test its validity as a new form of living educational theory and educational research methodology.

I am also a teacher educator who is attempting to improve the quality and understanding of his educative relationships with his students. In researching and accounting for my own educative relationships I use the standards of judgement from my view of educational theory to help my students to construct their own living theory. When I have defined the standards below I ask you to use them, together with your own, to test the validity of an account which shows my professional practice as a teacher educator.

TESTING THE VALIDITY OF MY ACCOUNT OF MY OWN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER

I think it will bear repeating that there are three original claims to educational knowledge in my account with which I am hoping you will identify. These are, that 'I' exists as a living contradiction in questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice, that 'I' is included as contradiction in a living form of action research methodology and that educational theory is constituted by the valid descriptions and explanations which individuals produce for their own educational development. Whilst space does not permit a full account of my educational development (Whitehead, 1993a) I can draw your attention to some of its key features.

The data I have gathered on my own educational development as a living contradiction is focused on the following experiences in 1976, 1980/82, 1987 and 1991. See if you identify with my existence as I try to reconstruct educational theory and contribute to a good social order. By a good social order I am meaning a social order in which the values I use to constitute my educative relationships can be freely expressed.

On 12 March 1976 the University informed me that my employment was to be terminated on the following grounds. Imagine this was written to you and remember that I believed that I was living a productive life in education which was contributing to the construction of a good social order.

Your teaching and research are unsatisfactory. You have disturbed the good order and morale of the School of Education.

In 1980 and 1982 my two PhD submissions were failed by 6 examiners on the following grounds. Again, do bear in mind that I viewed myself as a creative academic who was making original contributions to my subject, education and who had the right to question the validity of judgements made by those in authority. Do try to empathise with my experience of existing as a living contradiction on being informed that:

You have not demonstrated a capacity to conduct original investigations or to test your own ideas and those of others. Your theses contained no matter worthy of publication. You cannot resubmit your work. Under no circumstances can you question the competence of the examiners.

(I am pleased to report that some ten years later the University Regulations have now changed to permit questions to be raised about examiners on the grounds of bias, prejudice or inadequate assessment.)

The data also includes correspondence arising from complaints from two Professors of Education about my writings and activities in 1987. One letter, written under the authority of the University Council confounded my belief that I was contributing to the good order of my institution and that I had the academic freedom to teach and research;

Your activities and writings are a challenge to the present and proper organisation of the University and are not consistent with the duties the University wish you to pursue in teaching and research.

The data includes a report from a Senate Working Party on a matter of academic freedom which was convened after the claim from the Board of Studies for Education that there was prima-facie evidience that my academic freedom had been constrained. The Working Party concluded in May 1991 that they did not find that, in any of seven instances, my academic freedom had actually been breached.

This was however, because of Mr. Whitehead's persistence in the face of pressure; a less determined individual might well have been discouraged and therefore constrained.

In understanding my educational development I think it is necessary to recognise both the values which helped to ensure my 'persistence' and my integration of the insights from the theoretical perspective of others within my development.

My second claim is that my educational development as an educational researcher can be understood as a form of educational enquiry in which I have developed an action reflection cycle for answering and exploring the implications of questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'. Each of the above experiences of existing as a living contradiction moved my enquiry forward as I tried to live my values more fully in my practice. My published papers (Whitehead, 1993) show how my cognitive range and concerns were extended as I systematically developed my action plans, gathered data and evaluated the quality and effectiveness of my actions. These extensions included the development of an action research methodology for investigating questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'. They also included the integration of Habermas' (1976) ideas on validity in communicative action, Foucault's (1977) ideas on the role of the specific intellectual and the politics of truth, Bernstein's (1991) responses to the post-modern condition and Macintyre's (1990) ideas on the future of the University and the Lecture.

My third claim is perhaps the most ambitious in its scope. My claim to know my own educational development involves the explication of the criteria I use to test the validity of the claim. The form of the explication is I think consistent with my dialectical position. Rather than attempt a conceptual analysis of the meaning of the values which I use both to give a form to my life and to test the validity of my claims to educational knowledge, I clarify the meaning of my values in the course of their emergence in practice.

For example I think the above 'persistence' in the face of pressure can be understood in terms of my commitments to the freedom of enquiry, to educational theory as a form of dialogue, to support the power of truth against distortion by the power of truth, to fight injustice and, through my educative relationships, to enable others to speak in their own voices, to develop themselves and to participate in sustaining democratic forums of decision making.

Whatever the genesis of these commitments I have made them my own through facing the certainty of my death and asking myself, 'How do I live as good and productive life as possible?'. The work of Erich Fromm (1941, 1947) was an early influence and I remember, in 1967, how significant I found his point

that if an individual can face the truth without panic they will realise that there is no purpose to life other than that which they create for themselves through their loving relationships and productive work.

In addition to the above study of my educational development as an educational researcher I am also a teacher educator engaged in the self-study of his own practices.

TESTING THE VALIDITY OF MY ACCOUNT OF MY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AS A TEACHER EDUCATOR

As a teacher researcher and teacher educator I judge the quality of my educative relationships with my students by the extent to which they show that they have taken control of their own educational development. I am also concerned that they freely acknowledge the value of insights from the work of others in their development or that they give the reasons for their rejection of the ideas. The Action Research and Educational Theory Case Study Collection in the School of Education of the University of Bath (Reason 1993) contains the stories of the educational development of many of my students. The recent additions from Peggy Kok (1991) Titus Lo (1993) and C.C. Lin (1993) provide some fascinating insights into how students, who characterised themselves as Taiwanese Chinese, Singapore Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese, have integrated and transformed insights from a British Action Research Culture into their autobiographies of their educational development. The contribution of C.C. Lin (1993) in *Action Research: A Process of Becoming* is a highly original synthesis of Chinese and British cultural traditions which acknowledges the quality of the tutorial support she received from Moira Laidlaw, a part-time lecturer in the School of Education (Laidlaw, 1993). To show and explain my educative relationship with a teacher I am going to use an extract from Peggy Kok's MEd dissertation. In doing this I want to draw your attention to a difference between the impressive writings of academics, which are focused on reflection and narrative (Clandinin 1993; Calderhead 1988; Pollard and Tann 1987; Valli 1993; LaBoskey 1993), and my own self-study. I am drawn to Valli's (1993) point that there is a potential danger in over-valuing process in much research on reflection in teacher education.

A process focus could detract from more central questions of the purpose, content and quality of reflection. How to get students to reflect can take on a life of its own, can become the programmatic goal.

I want to avoid such a criticism in the self-study of my teacher education practices. I think I avoid this in the example below because my student is exploring her educational development in her own voice whilst in an educative conversation with me. I think those involved in the self-study of their teacher education practices could avoid such criticisms by asking themselves questions such as, what evidence do I have that I have influenced the quality of education of my students?'; what values do I use to judge the quality of my student's educational development?'; how do I justify holding these values in relation to meeting the educational needs of my student and in relation to a view of a good social order.

AN EDUCATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH PEGGY KOK

During the 1990/91 academic year I tutored Peggy Kok for two action research modules and her M.Ed.. dissertation. Peggy was on study leave from the Singapore Vocational, Industrial Training Board. In the following chapter from her M.Ed. dissertation, *The Art of an Educational Enquirer*, Peggy analyses four educative conversations in which she is experiencing a tension between her commitment to the values of excellence and the social order in Singapore and to the values of freedom, justice and democracy within a different form of social order.

Peggy's chapter is presented in full below. I do not want to edit it as it reflects a struggle for meaning whose authenticity I witnessed. Yet I do want to engage with her text at the points where I think it is revealing something significant about my own educational values and competencies. You will see my responses in this typeface. I do hope that these are not experienced as violations of Peggy's text. I

also want to show an educative relationship which can be understood in terms of educative purposes rather than being constituted by the systemics of schooling. The relationship between educative purposes and the systemics of schooling is the focus of a symposium at this conference on Fenstermacher's (1994) question, *"How can we aid teachers in resolving the tension between systemics and education so that they are better able to address the educative purposes of schooling without becoming mired in the systemics?"* Whilst this question is being addressed in the context of pre-service teacher education, I also think that it is important to show educative purposes in action in the educative relationships of teacher educators in the continuing professional development of teachers.

In the following extract Peggy Kok shows both my professional practice, in the quality of the educative conversations transcribed below and, more importantly, her own creative, critical and meaning making capacities in giving a form to her own undersanding of the nature of education. What I think the extract shows above all is a student speaking in her own voice and, with the help of a tutor, educating herself.

In using the following extract to test the validity of my claim to know my own professional practice as a teacher educator I am asking you to use the following standards of judgement. I think of these standards as the values and understandings I use to give my life its particular form in my vocation of education.

Perhaps the most familiar standard is the one where education students are initiated into the ideas of others, as they extend their cogntive range and concerns. As she struggles to understand the value-laden nature of education and educational research, Peggy shows critical insight into the ideas of John Dewey, Stephen Corey, Lawrence Stenhouse, Richard Peters and others at a level which examiners have judged to be at a level appropriate for a masters students. These ideas were included in the formal curriculum of the action research modules studied by Peggy as part of her masters programme.

I use the standard of personal knowledge (Polanyi 1958) in encouraging my students to understand the world from their points of view as individuals claiming originality and exercising their judgement with universal intent. I think you will experience a student's creativity in the dialogues below in which she is speaking for herself and showing the nature of an educational enquiry in action.

I also submit my work to the following four standards of social validity (Habermas 1976, Whitehead and Foster 1984):

i) I try to show my students how both propositional and dialectical logic can help to give a coherence to their accounts through forms of presentation which embody the art of a dialectician. In the form of representation used by Peggy Kok I think the art of a dialectician is expressed in the form of a dialogue of questions and answers which contains propositional forms of understanding and shows a process of transformation in her understanding of the values of education and of the nature of an action research approach to professional practice.

ii) I insist that propositional claims to knowledge can be supported or challenged by reference to various kinds of evidence. This enables theoretical and methodological insights from different forms of knowledge such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, history and natural science to be integrated within a claim to educational knowledge.

iii) Because all claims to educational knowledge are value-laden I insist that different norms, from different cultural backgrounds, should be made explicit and their justifications made public. For example you will hear in the following conversations a tension within Peggy and myself as we struggle at relating the values of excellence and authority from her own culture with the values of freedom, justice and democracy from my culture. In a study of my own educational development over 20 years at the University of Bath, I offer a justification for my educational values in terms of my attempt to live a good and productive life whilst contributing to the educational development of others and a good

social order.

iv) Finally I insist that authentic forms of representation within which the individual's spiritual and moral commitments in education, can be acknowledged, shared with others in a communicable form. and related to the construction and sustaining of good forms of social order (McNiff, Whitehead & Laidlaw 1992; Lomax 1994).

I offer these standards as the values I think you should use in holding me to account in my educative relationships and in my claims to know my own professional practice. In judging the quality of my educative relationships with my students I look for the evidence which I can relate to the above educational and academic standards. Some of the evidence which I am given each year by my own education students shows that I am a living contradiction in the sense of negating some of my values. At some point it shows that I am not meeting the educational needs of some students. This experience is always uncomfortable and sometimes painful and full of tension. It usually spurs me to ask, 'How can I improve my practice?'. I recognise the importance of studying my attempts to improve the quality of my response to education students who think that I am not meeting their educational needs. However, the following extract shows someone else's tension rather than my own! It helps me to retain my faith in the power of education for good and the quality of some of my educative relationships.

PEGGY KOK - THE ART OF AN EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRER - CHAPTER 6

In Chapter 1, I had likened the writing of this dissertation to Dewey's (1934) notion of building a cathedral:

'Probably the aesthetic quality of medieval cathedrals is due in some measure to the fact that their constructions were not so much controlled by plans and specifications made in advance as is now the case. Plans grew as the building grew...Every work of art follows the plan of, and pattern of, a complete experience, rendering it more intensely and concentratedly felt.'

I had made many changes to the original outline of my dissertation in the course of writing but the overall objective of the dissertation has always been kept in sight. Each change had followed reflection upon what I had written and consultation with my supervisor. The writing of the previous chapters was pure labour of thoughts. However, I feel that it somehow lacked the aesthetic quality that Dewey was talking about. It did not possess the intensity of a 'complete experience'. It was a technically competent piece of work so far - the cathedral is merely structurally sound.

This last chapter is part of the dissertation where art enters it. Art as defined by Dewey (1934) is not an object to be put on a pedestal and admired by the privileged few. Instead art should be seen in the light of the experience of the artist in the creation of an object.

'With respect to the physical materials that enter into the formation of a work of art, everyone knows that they must undergo change. Marble must be chipped; pigments must be laid on canvas; words must be put together. It is not so generally recognized that a similar transformation takes place on the "inner" materials, images, observations, memories and emotions. They are also progressively re-formed; they, too must be administered. This modification is the building up of a truly expressive act. The impulsion that seethes as a commotion demanding utterance must undergo as much and as careful management in order to receive eloquent manifestations as marble or pigment, as colours and sounds.' (Dewey, op. cit.)

In this chapter, you will be able to see how the commotion of emotions arose within me, how they were managed and directed towards manifestation as a work of art. I will show that the writing of this chapter has been an experience that follows the order below:

'Life itself consists of phases in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it - either through effort or by some happy chance. And, in a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through

which it has successfully passed. Life grows when a temporary falling out is a transition to a more extensive balance of the energies of the organism with those of the conditions under which it lives." (Dewey, op.cit.)

It is the story of how I had passed through the turmoils experienced when I discovered that my values were in conflict with those advocated in the living educational approach to action research and how I resolved those conflicts, finding a balance between my 'energies' and the conditions under which I live in my country and in so doing I have fashioned a work of art out of the rigid structure of the earlier chapters. The content of this chapter is made up of real-life experience. A large part of it was derived from the tape-recording of the third and fourth conversations I had with Jack Whitehead and an interview with Jim Harvey, Director of Studies (Transcripts 3, 4 and 5).

Dances with Action Research

I was courting action research for the six months that I had been on the two action research modules. There were times when I had wanted to call off the relationship and there were times when I considered marriage. At the end of my assignment for the second module I saw myself very much like the hero in the film *'Dances with Wolves'* and summed up my feelings for action research in the following way:

'I see the present stage of my development in action research as being at the point where the soldier, out of loneliness at his post, built a fire and did a Red Indian Dance round it. He was able to forget his inhibitions and the fact that he was white and for the duration of the dance he was just communicating with his friends through dance unaware that they were watching him. He was called Dances with Wolves because a wolf was near him when he was dancing. Perhaps I may be called at this stage of my educational development - Dances with action research. Perhaps I am shedding my inhibitions more and more, now that my understanding of Action Research has deepened through the two inquiries I carried out in this assignment.' (Kok, 1991)

As a result of my intense involvement with action research over a period of six months, I had decided to probe deeper into this unorthodox way of doing educational research through a dissertation which I knew would take me to the core of action research based on the living educational theory approach. As can be seen from the previous chapters in this dissertation, I had positive feelings about action research as the sensible alternative to the traditional method of doing educational research. I had demonstrated my understanding of the form and content of the living educational theory in the preceding chapters. From there, I could have proceeded according to my original plan of applying the set of criteria I came up with to some action research case-studies and finish up the dissertation with whether I thought action research was capable of standing up to criticisms that it lacked rigour and validity. This plan was not followed through because after the first two interviews with Jack Whitehead in which the purpose was to get real-life knowledge about his theory. It suddenly dawned on me that there were ideas that I could not agree with and that there existed fundamental differences between Whitehead's and my concept of what 'values' should be.

Experience of Disharmony

It all began when I discovered that the values that permeated the action research inquiries of both Whitehead and those who practise his living educational theory approach to action research, were values which I could not advocate to be the dynamic force behind the action research which I would do in the VITB. It was not so much the discovery of the difference in values between us but the realisation that in order to do action research and be true to the living educational theory of Jack Whitehead, I would have to actively promote the values that form the basis of his theory. Because of the realisation that there was no way in which I could take action research back to my place of work with the values held by Whitehead that a sense of alienation overcame me. Although I have adopted the form of the living educational theory approach to action research, I was not prepared to retain the values that were central to this approach:

***Peggy:** I notice that the values that you hold are very strong in the areas of democracy, justice and freedom and when I looked through the case studies, these values were also reflected there in the work of Erica, Kevin Eames and Moira. These are the values you hold and which others working with you are also holding. That's why you*

aim for change, not just in the teachers but also in the students for a better society, am I right?

Jack:*Yes you are right, go on.*

Peggy: *I was confused all over again. I read Dewey's (1966) 'Democracy and Education', the chapter on 'Vocational Aspects of Education'. I read it some time ago but did not find that I could use any of it, didn't really get much from it. Yesterday, I read the chapter again, took down some notes and found myself disagreeing with the whole lot of it. That's (what Dewey had written) the ideal. Where I come from and you know it, it's the total opposite of what Dewey is advocating for education and vocational training. What he disagrees with, I agree with because that's my society and then I began to ask myself, 'Can I have these values of freedom, democracy and justice?' Well, as an individual, as a person, probably. I don't know. But being where I am, in that kind of set-up, I cannot hold these values because if I do, it will be in total opposition to my place of work and even my country. I can't go back and ask the trainers to train their students to be more democratic, to question, because we are in training and it is very complicated. The students who come to us are not academically inclined. They come to us for a skill and all we teach them is skills and our better society is that they get a job, everybody gets a home and we have progress in our way - mechanistic, materialistic but that is our way of life.*

What then are the values that I hold which are contrary to those held by Whitehead?

'If I go back, what are my values and if I intend to do action research there, I must have values because it (action research) is meaningless without the values. I would say that based on who I am, what I have been through, the situation I am in, who I work for, my country, I think that my values would be in line with those of the government, and that is 'excellence' in whatever you do and I will hold this value when I train my students and they will do likewise when they train their students.'

Whitehead made his view regarding educational values very clear when he said:

'Now this is something that you and I have talked about, about the way which in educational research, it is the values which characterise whether that what you are doing is educational or not. And you know within my own culture, I have selected values which I think have universal potential, they may not have, but I think they have and those are the ones you've picked out - democracy, freedom and justice.' (All extracts above are from Transcript 3)

The following extracts from the transcript of the fourth conversation we had provide further clarification of Whitehead's position:

Peggy: *We were talking about values and how your set of values of democracy, freedom and justice are fine for your culture and in a way you are going for social revolution. Jim had said, 'Jack is for revolution, I'm for evolution.' (Transcript 5). What do you have to say?*

Jack: *I think that if we take the positive view of revolution which is Kuhn's idea and the debates he had with Popper about changing a way of thinking, changing the way we act in the world then yes, I feel I am a revolutionary in that sense. Now, I take that to be a positive view - revolution - where you get paradigm changes. Kuhn talked about the structure of scientific revolution in a very positive way. It was a way of taking ideas forward. But if he used it in a way which tended to have negative connotation, which had to do with the revolutions in places like the Soviet Union because of commitment to a particular ideology so that it became a class struggle between capital and labour, then in that sense of a revolution, then I am not a revolutionary. My own belief is that if you work from what I call the ideological base, if you work trying to transform the way people think, the values they subscribe to, the form of action that they take, then you will lead to social improvement, you will lead to the transformation of the world to greater democracy, to greater freedom and greater justice. Now that is where I place my faith for social change and social improvement rather than in mobilising on a class-based struggle, the power relations between power and labour.*

Can you see in the section Peggy has italicised above that I am seeking to communicate to a student the values which have characterised my educational development throughout my research programme? I am expressing a commitment to transform the way in which people think, the values they hold and the actions they take in a way which leads to greater freedom, greater justice and greater democracy. Back to Peggy.

Why was there a conflict and why couldn't the conflict of values be resolved? My difficulty in fully accepting Whitehead's values as the basis for the action research that I would be prepared to do lies in the explanation below:

'I really appreciate that I have come into a culture where I am exposed to these values, like you say they are universal values. But also I have to fight against what I am, what I have been brought up as, the country I grew up in, the set-up that I work with. So I find that on the one hand these are human values (democracy, freedom and justice) that I should as a human being hold. On the other hand, I am in a country where I see progress, I don't see people starving, I don't see beggars and for everything the government takes from us - the taxes - we get it all back. People have homes so I think it is not bad too and what Dewey says about vocational training, that it should not be slotting people, putting people into specific occupations and then then they are stuck for life, well, I don't agree with that. To a certain extent it is true, people who are streamed or channelled find themselves in vocational training and they will be technicians, they work in factories but it is not true to the extent that the government makes sure of progression for people in their lines of work. There are classes, funds for training, you can study, you can move, you are not stuck in a rut, you are not forever a production worker. I don't agree with Dewey's view but of course he is in another culture that is different from mine. He has not been in my culture to see that done in a way which he thinks is wrong. Things work and people are happy.'

I agree that the values of freedom, democracy and justice are universal in that they do promote peace and make the world a better place for every one in it. I respect people who hold these values and believe that the world should be transformed through education towards those ends. I experience a great tension in trying to sort out two sets of values (a) the values of freedom, democracy and justice which I can see are noble and agree that people should hold these values for a quality of life that goes beyond material and economic successes and (b) the value of excellence in whatever we strive towards be it at a personal, group, work or national level. I believe that the first set of values is good but I happen to place more importance on the second set of values and both sets are directly opposing in nature but at the end of the day, it's the second set of values that won. As Jack said:

'You've dealt with something which is really fundamental in terms of the economic and material base of peoples' existence which is a value which doesn't come into democracy, justice and freedom that we do need that value that the vast majority of us place on economic survival and you have actually put that as a central value. That is where there is a conflict between various values. Very different balance. But I think you've got on tape here the nature of the values that you hold.' (Transcript 3)

Towards the end of the third interview, I still had not found a way to resolve the tension that was tormenting me:

Jack: *What you have got on tape here is very important about tensions you have experienced and are experiencing.*

Peggy: *I am in training, not education. For twelve years I have been in vocational training and I can't suddenly change and say that just because certain values are embraced in the West, this is progressive thinking and I should go back and advocate change for society through education.*

Jack: *I suppose the difference is this: my work is in education, the degree you are going to get is a Master of Education. I think that we have actually fulfilled what I understand by the criteria of education. I've seen you*

thinking, developing. So from my point of view, the process of education I have seen working within you...

Peggy: *I have been educated. I wasn't educated in schools, I was taught. I wasn't even educated in the university. But I think I truly had an education here.*

Jack: *This is what my father told me about the university. He said that in his whole working life he had very little time to think because of the nature of his job and once you get into full-time employment you will find very little time to think because it should be educational. Now hopefully this year, you've been able to - and I've seen you working extremely hard but with the time to think, so even if you now go back into a context that - like my father was describing, the vast majority of his life is going to be training - is going to become better and more efficient and excellent in training, the fact that you've had twelve months...*

I have had twelve months to think and I felt very privileged to have had this time to develop my mind but I was not contented with having had the time to think. I wanted something concrete, something usable, something that I could do in the future that would draw on all the thoughts and experience I had accumulated here in the University of Bath and which would enhance my practice although I am aware that the quality of thoughts manifested in practice cannot be measured in tangible terms. I should have been happy to finish this dissertation with what Whitehead had proposed in the third interview:

'What you could do is simply leave the ending of your dissertation where you are at the moment, that is, the recognition that there are different value positions within your own commitments and in the commitments of this group here, couldn't you? I mean that is true.'

I was conscious at the moment of saying this that I was holding to Buber's view of the educative relation in which the educator subordinates his or her own structured view of the world to the particular being of the student. At this moment I had accepted Peggy's right not to embrace my educational values and to hold firm in her own. I think this ability is one of the great achievements of an educator. It seems to me that this ability prevents the abuse of power in an educative relationship. Peggy was free of any intentional constraints on my part that she should conform to my educational values. I had accepted Peggy's right to be different. However Peggy moves on...

That was true - right to the very end of the third interview, that was the position I held. I left the interview feeling that an ending like that to the dissertation and to the one year of work in action research would have been education for education's sake. My feelings were exactly those described below by Dewey (1934):

'The rhythm of loss of integration with environment and recovery of union not only persists in man but becomes conscious with him; its conditions are material out of which he forms purposes. Emotion is the conscious sign of a break, actual or impending. The discord is the occasion that induces reflection. Desire for restoration of the union converts mere emotion into interest in objects as conditions of realization of harmony. With the realization, material of reflection is incorporated into objects as their meaning. Since the artist cares in a particular way for the phase of experience in which union is achieved, he does not shun moments of resistance and tension. He rather cultivates them, not for their own sake but because of their potentialities, bringing to living consciousness an experience that is unified and total.'

I had wanted to write this dissertation the way an artist creates a work of art. I wanted to be able to step back when this dissertation is finished and be able to see a synthesis of all that I have thought about and experienced in the form of a harmonious whole. I needed to carry on, to move forward with what I had learnt. The stumbling block was my inability to take back with me the set of values of freedom, democracy and justice which was the motivating force behind the living educational approach to action research. I could import the method of doing action research and leave the values behind but that would be like telling people to how to do something without telling them why and without them wanting to change their own practice themselves. I was still plagued by the tension of seeing two sets of values which I could not reconcile and which I believe are equally good. To choose

one over the other would mean annihilation of half of what I believe in and leave me with a sense of incompleteness. I was out of rhythm with life but I did not give up hope that my tensions could be resolved. If one can break one's back doing manual work then my brain almost suffered the same fate. Fortunately, by the fourth interview the next day, I had found the synthesis I had been looking for.

Resolution

It was sheer agony trying to overcome this tension within me and to finally decide for myself what I should do. Peters (1973) was right when he wrote:

'Independence of thought is not a natural unfolding; it is a laborious achievement.'

I had spent all my waking hours reflecting on the conversation with Whitehead in the third interview. I had to see things in perspective. I went home and read once more Corey's (1953) *'Action Research To Improve Schools'* the first book written on action research in education. I read again Rudduck and Hopkins (1985) *'Research as a basis for teaching: Readings from the work of Lawrence Stenhouse'* and R.S. Peters' (1959) *'Authority, Responsibility and Education'*. I then came to the following conclusion [as I wrote in my journal]:

'Yesterday when I went home I was thinking of what Jim had said - I was listening to the tape of the interview with him on the bus - the first question he asked was 'What's the difference between action research and what Jack is doing?' I asked him what he thought action research was and he said that action research was just problem-solving. You don't have to put the 'I' in it. Values don't have to come into it. I thought perhaps that's another view of action research. I have been exposed to most of the time just your brand of it and I thought maybe it will be quite interesting to see if he's right. I went back and read Corey and I find that this is nearer to Jim's definition of action research - problem-solving. But it is one step ahead of Jim's definition because Corey says that it is the practitioner who should do action research and he says that it has to be very scientifically done so he says you have to set up a hypothesis, test the hypothesis, not quite in the way that you do it but for example I may have this hypothesis that in this situation, if I applied this method the kids would do better. Then the teachers would either alone or collaboratively go into this action research. They could collect data, they could go into quantitative analysis, come to a decision, apply it and decide whether they have improved. So I find that this is still one step away from what Stenhouse is advocating. Stenhouse moves away from the quantitative but focuses more on the meaning generated by the teacher, what the teacher is capable of doing herself, because she has experience and knowledge, tacit knowledge that kind of thing. Then I find that what Stenhouse is advocating is still one step away from what you are doing. It appears to me that you take Stenhouse's idea of the teacher as researcher but you put the "I" inside, the values. At the end of it I put it down in a hierarchy like this and said "Let's look at Jim's version, then go into Corey's - because he was the first person to write about it - and then into Stenhouse and then into your theory. I find that of the four, maybe because I have spent so much time on your theory - but having looked at the overview in a way, I think that your theory is more powerful than all the rest because I've been through it and if you put the "I" in it, change will come because when you put the 'I' in it, it is the teacher who says, 'I want to change because I see the need to change' Whereas in the other cases it is, "here's the problem, how do you solve it?' Stenhouse is of course better than the other two because he says, 'Look at the teacher, I believe that the teacher has the judgement to know what's right and wrong and how to improve her practice.' But in your case you put the values in.'

Having now put things in their proper perspective, I was able to resolve the tension of the past few days in the following way:

'When it comes to values of democracy, freedom and justice, I've thought about it. I said yesterday that I couldn't bring those values back and use them as the base for the education of the trainees the way it is done here. You are actually educating your young to be more critical so that you move towards a society which is more questioning and not take things handed down by authority; and the whole idea is you work towards a better society in that way, human rights and things like that. I thought about it. I can't bring it back and have the

trainees embrace these values. I can't preach these values to the trainees in the VITB. But as I read R.S. Peters' 'Authority, Responsibility and Education' the chapter on 'Education and seeing what is there' - there is this part where he said:

'Individual inventiveness is always to be understood against a background of a public inheritance. And though good teachers always encourage individuals to develop their own point of view, they also provide them with the necessary equipment to have one.'

And it is education which provides this equipment, which transforms the wild wishes and intuitions of the individual into an informed understanding and inventiveness. For we have to be trained to see things as they are - and to see what no one else has seen.That's what you are doing. You provide the teachers with the equipment i.e. through action research to be more critical, to be more open to ideas, to develop themselves and they in turn use this process to develop their students in that way. So you can do it this way. I thought about it. I like what R.S Peters said about providing teachers with the necessary equipment to develop their own point of view. I am a teacher trainer, or educator whatever, well, my business is to train teachers to be effective in their job. If I can't reach the students (trainees), I don't think I want to because of my values, I could reach the teachers and say that if you want to improve your job then one way is to be more reflective, to be more critical and to work more democratically and collaboratively, to have part of these values (freedom, democracy and justice) so that they can improve their job, and the consequence would be that the trainees will benefit because of their improvement. Just as I have come here and have gone through this process and I think educationally I have improved. I have read things which I have never read, I have been exposed to your theory, I have had these conversations with you to develop intellectually in this way. So I hope that when I go back and do action research it would be towards this end, that I would equip my trainers with whatever is necessary to develop their own points of view - to question me if I were to tell them that 'This method is good', not to just take it but to question and to develop, to think what is good for them in their practice. That's all I can do. I can't go for social change.'

I found harmony at last in coming to a compromise between the values of freedom, democracy and justice and the values I held regarding excellence in doing a job. The action research that I take back with me to my place of work will be based on the values of excellence which I will promote in using action research in teacher training just as Whitehead promotes the values of freedom, democracy and justice in his action research activities in the United Kingdom. I have to make very clear that it is the value of excellence that powers the action research that I would be prepared to do back in my place of work: .

Jack: *So I think you have got a way of working in terms of how you described it with your teachers that will enable you to live out your values.*

Peggy: *Yes, but* ***the ultimate aim in that is still they have to be excellent in what they do, they have to be effective.*** *It is very instrumental in achieving this very objective kind of end, but I want to see results, I want to see that their practice is improved, that they should be better than they were - like me. I know that I am intellectually better than when I first came. My capacity has been stretched and improved. So that is how I'll see the goal for these teachers I train. They should always believe in excellence and they should live it out and they should have proof that they have improved. And the way I go through with it is to use your process of action research because I think that is the most powerful of all because the teacher herself examines her values and of course these values will be towards excellence and here she wants to improve, that is the important thing.*

Whitehead sums up exactly my position at this point of the conversation when he said:

'I think when you hear this tape, you will hear the kind of resolution to the kind of tension that you expressed the other day and I think you've really worked through to a position which enables you to resolve some of the tension you have. So I think you now see a way forward when you go back to relate to the teachers that you are working with in a way that enables you to bring in some of the educational values you hold whilst at the same

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time enhancing their skills in the direction that you believe to be enhanced. So that's what I feel in terms of that conversation.'

Personally I feel that the ability to resolve the tension I was experiencing for the past few days is expressed most clearly in the following excerpt from the fourth interview:

'I am not in education. I am not a teacher in the Ministry of Education. And in the Vocational and Industrial Training Board, neither am I a member of the training staff - I don't train students in acquiring skills - I am in a strange position where I could, I should educate people, I am dealing with trainers who would train another group of people. So I suppose having come this far, I've had the opportunity to think about it, my role. The way I have seen my role as a teacher trainer, has been very narrow, because I see my role as a trainer in skills. I impart teaching skills to the trainers who then impart trade skills to the trainees. So may be this is what R.S Peters talks about as the "tunnel vision" that you just see things from a framework. For twelve years I have seen my role within a framework of skill training. I think this experience here, having had the opportunity to think about what education is, I am able to see, I can see that there is a wider world, there is a world outside of this framework that I work in. It's not just training because if you just train people to teach and they just apply the skills that they learn from you, it is mechanistic, you are after all dealing with human beings. So maybe I see my role should not be merely to train people mechanistically as we have been doing but also to educate them...to train them to be more independent in their thinking. See I use the word 'train' again. or rather to provide them with the facility to think for themselves and questioning of me, not of authority, but of me, to dare to come and discuss in the open, not to be defensive, if they are challenged in turn. But really I think this kind of education should also come into the preparation of teachers who are vocational trainers. I think I see that now. The teachers would be poorer if they just went away with a set of skills. They would be much enriched if the way they have been prepared for teaching trains them to develop educationally and individually and as human beings. I think I see this other side now.'

I had found the solution at last in being able to incorporate the two conflicting sets of values into a way of doing action research that I can accept and carry out. Because action research is in essence participatory and collaborative involving critical reflection and judgement, people have to work closely and harmoniously. If freedom, democracy and justice are values which people can be encouraged to hold in the process of inquiring into ways to improve their practice, then the process of action research will proceed more smoothly. In other words, the values of freedom, democracy and justice will, for me, become part of the process of action research and not the basis of action research.

I had said explicitly that the value that underpins the form of the action research that I would take back with me would be the value of excellence in performance. It is at this point that I moved away in spirit from the living educational theory because as I had told Whitehead:

'the values that I bring back - not your values, but the values I have come to on my own.' (Transcript 4)

I am now able to step back and enjoy my art.

The reason I would say our relationship was an educative one was because both tutor and student learnt something significant. Peggy learnt how to hold together values she initially believed to be opposed. I learnt to refocus my attention on to the educative power of conversations and correspondences. This Chapter of Peggy's dissertation had a profound influence on me of the same quality as the one I experienced in 1971 on reading the work of Michael Polanyi at the point where he explained that the basis of personal knowledge was a decision to understand the world from one's own point of view as an individual claiming originality and exercising judgement with universal intent.

I wonder if you have found anything of significance in my paper which might convince you to support this kind of narrative as a way of reconstructing educational theory from the basis of your living

educational practices. I am drawn back to Edward Said's point that the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Whilst applauding Eisner's (1993) narrative last year, I was responding to the power of his rhetoric to captivate my imagination. I also felt critical that educational researchers must go much further forward if they are to reconstruct educational theory.

To achieve this reconstruction I think such rhetoric (Whitehead 1993b) must be accompanied by the case studies which show how it is integrated within our own educational development . I think we can achieve such integration by examining our attempts to live our values as fully as possible within our professional practices. I am hopeful that we will see many more educational researchers making their contributions to educational knowledge and educational theory as forms of dialogue which, because of the value-laden nature of education, can be shown to have profound implications for the future of humanity. National Educational Research Associations provide the opportunity to share our insights and understandings on the nature of educational theory and educational knowledge. Without in any way wanting to support an imperialist project I wonder about the educative possibilities of creating a world-wide confederation of educational research associations. The British Educational Research Association will be helping to contribute to such a movement in a European context at its Annual Conference in Bath University in 1995. The World Congress 3 on Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management at Bath University 6-9 July 1994 has the theme Accounting for Ourselves. This is another forum which researchers from around the world can hold themselves to account in relation to the values they hold and the understandings which structure their contributions to creating a better world. I wonder what you think of my point that such contributions may depend on each of us being willing to explore the implications of questions such as, 'How do I help my students to improve the quality of their learning?'or 'How do I improve my practice?'. I wonder what the respondents to this paper think of my point that educational theory could be constituted by the accounts of our productive lives and educative relationships in ways which show how we are supporting the power of truth against distortions by the truth of power in our workplaces and societies and which show our students are speaking in their own voices and making their own contributions to the creation of a better world.

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